

While secret laughter titter'd round the place ;
 The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
 The matron's glance that would those looks reprove : 30
 These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,
 With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please ;
 These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
 These were thy charms,—but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn !
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
 And desolation saddens all thy green :
 One only master grasps the whole domain,
 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain. 40
 No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
 But chok'd with sedges works its weedy way ;
 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
 The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ;
 Amidst thy desert-walks the lapwing flies,
 And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
 Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
 And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;
 And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
 Far, far away thy children leave the land. 50

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
 Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made :
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
 When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
 When every rood of ground maintain'd its man ;
 For him light labour spread her wholesome store,